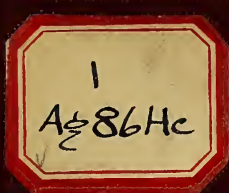
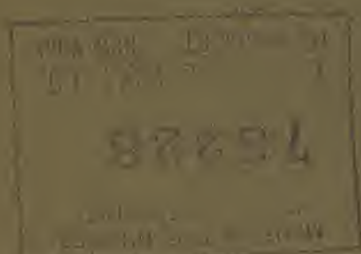


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THE CITY'S PART IN SOLVING THE FARM-LABOR PROBLEM.

Responsibility of Town People in Production of Enough Staple Food.

By David F. Houston, Secretary of Agriculture.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *March 4, 1918.*

Some time ago I issued a statement concerning the farm-labor problem. It was pointed out that there will be farm-labor difficulties to overcome this year as last and that in certain sections, especially in the neighborhood of large industrial centers, the difficulties will be acute. The lines of effort were indicated along which the Departments of Agriculture and Labor, through representatives in various States cooperating with the agricultural colleges and other agencies, are working to furnish assistance. Briefly restated, these agencies are doing the following things: (a) Making a survey of the farm-labor situation in each community with a view to discover possible surpluses of labor in order to be ready to assist in furnishing labor wherever it is needed; (b) assisting again in shifting labor from community to community and from State to State, as in past years; (c) promoting fuller cooperation among farmers in the same community; (d) making available, so far as possible, high-school boys in rural districts who have had experience in farming and who are not normally, regularly or fully employed in farming operations; (e) making every effort to see that there is no obstacle in the way of the production of a larger supply of farm machinery and its fuller use as a supplement to hand labor.

If soldiers are willing to serve in the trenches, to dig ditches, build railroads, and risk their lives, many civilians can well afford to spare a part of their time to serve in the furrows and in the harvest fields.—Secretary of Agriculture.

It will not be too much to ask able-bodied men with farm experience to aid the farmers in the necessary task of maintaining the food supply.—Secretary of Agriculture.

Last year, in spite of all the difficulties, the farmers planted the largest acreages in the history of the Nation, harvested record crops of most important things except wheat, and succeeded in greatly increasing the number of live stock. Since last year skilled farm labor has been given deferred classification and the Secretary of War has asked for power to furlough soldiers of the National Army if their training permits, so that they may return to their farms and assist. It is believed that the farmers of the Nation can, by effective organization and cooperation, with such assistance as can be furnished, again overcome labor difficulties and produce large quantities of foods, feedstuffs, and live stock.

Communities Must Be Ready to Aid Farmers.

There is an opportunity now for urban people sympathetically and constructively to study the farm-labor situation and to render assistance. In many towns and cities there are men who have had farming experience, who are able-bodied, and who would doubtless be willing to serve the Nation in the field of agriculture at this time. Especially for the seasonal strains of planting, cultivating, and harvesting, it will not be too much to ask such men to aid the farmers in the necessary undertaking of maintaining and, if possible, supplementing the food supply in order to feed the armies and to sustain the civilian population behind them. If soldiers are willing to serve in the trenches, to dig ditches, build railroads, and risk their lives, many civilians can well afford to spare a part of their time to serve in the furrows and in the harvest fields. If it appears that the farmers of a community or region are not able to secure the necessary labor by the usual methods, then the leaders in the town or city immediately dependent upon that region should organize, establish touch with representative farm leaders, and see if they cannot assist

in solving the problem. In so doing they will not only aid the farmers of the Nation, but they will vitally contribute to their own well-being and to that of their community.

The farmers are willing to do all that they humanly can, but where their labor supply cannot be furnished from the ordinary sources, it must be recruited from those whose very sustenance depends upon the farmers. The soldier and the farmer are eager to do their full share; the soldier is taking the chances of losing his life and the farmer is risking the labors of a year on the chance of the seasons; both incur risks. Very many civilians are equally eager to do their share, but may not appreciate the opportunity to serve in the field of agriculture.

The Department of Agriculture and Labor will render every possible aid, but each community knows its own problems, and urban people, especially business men, could cooperate effectively with the farmers and also render much assistance.

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